

1301.0 - Year Book Australia, 1908

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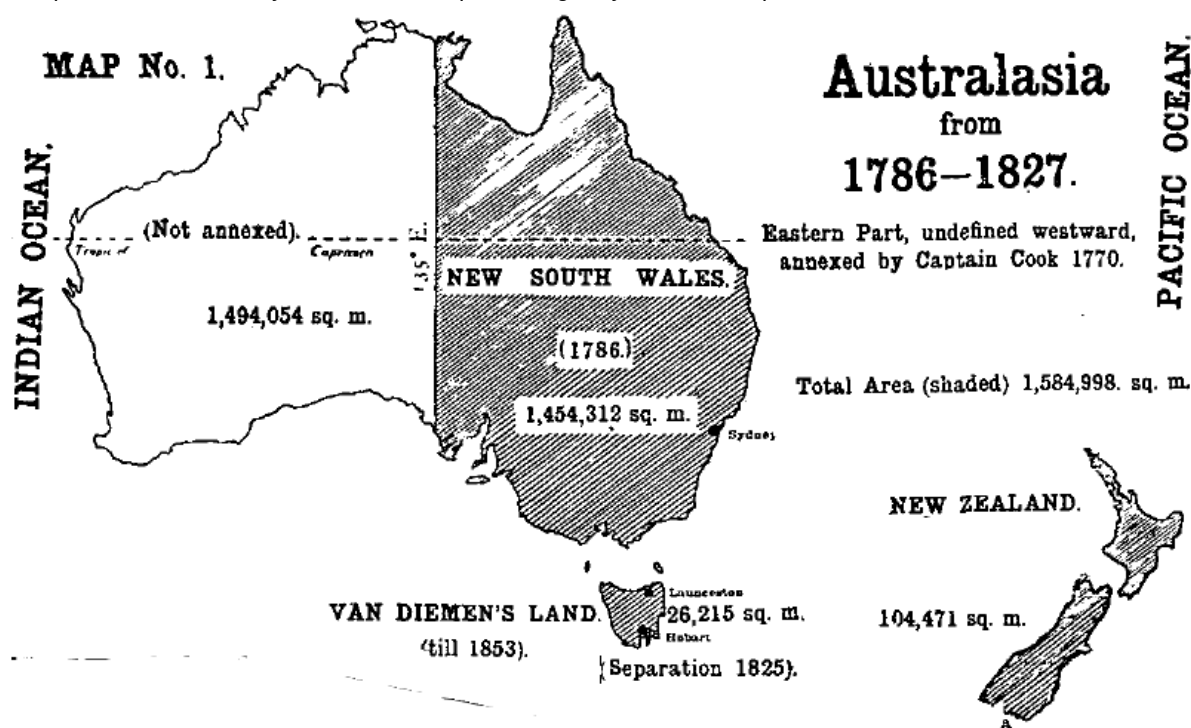
This article is extracted from Year Book Australia 1908 (pp. 52)

THE CREATION OF THE SEVERAL COLONIES

1. New South Wales as Original Colony.—From what has been said, the mainland of Australia was, in Governor Phillip's commission of 1786, originally as shown on map No. 1, that is, it was divided by the 135th meridian of east longitude into two parts. The earliest colonists believed that Van Diemen's Land—the present State of Tasmania—was actually joined to the mainland, and it was not till 1798 that the contrary was known. In that year, by sailing through Bass Straits, Flinders proved that it was an island. The territory of New South Wales, as originally constituted, including New Zealand, was thus:—

	Square Miles
Australia, east of 135° Longitude East	1,454,312
Van Diemen's Land	26,215
New Zealand	104,471
Total	1,584,998

The western part of Australia, not yet annexed, comprised originally 1,494,054 square miles.

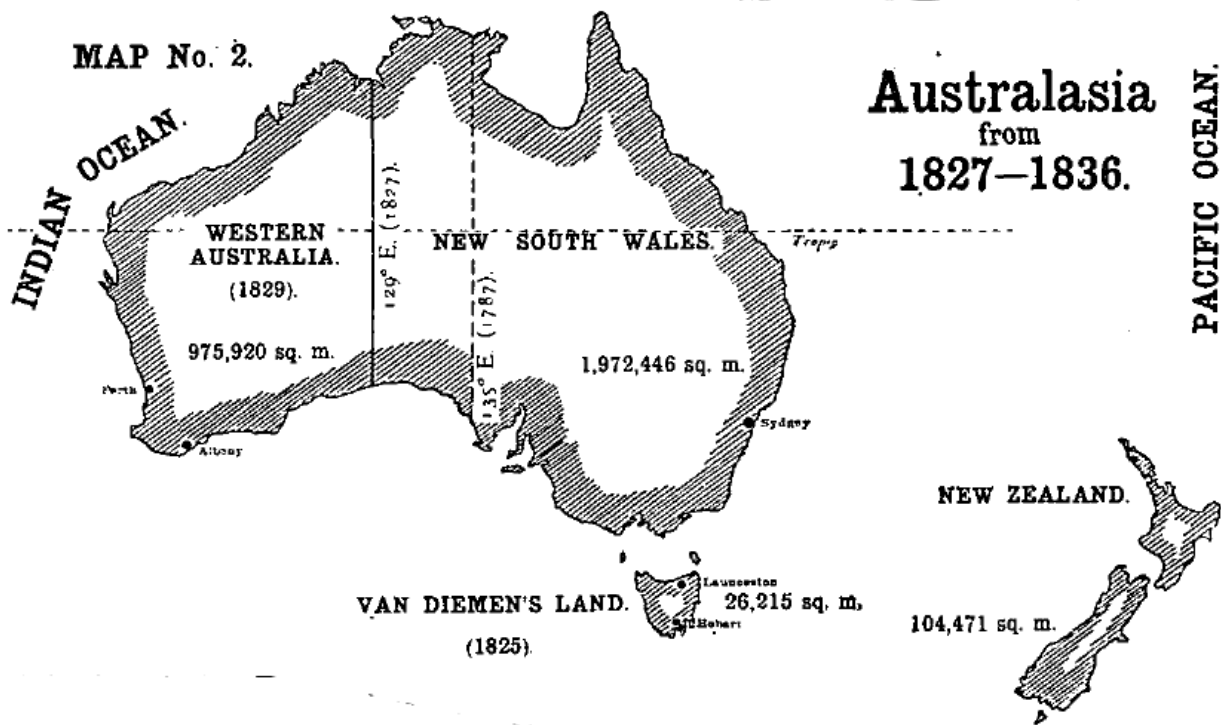


2. Separation of Van Diemen's Land.—In 1825, Van Diemen's Land, as Tasmania was then called, was politically separated from New South Wales, being constituted a separate colony on 14th June of that year. This reduced the area of New South Wales and its territorial dependencies by 26,215 square miles, that is, to 1,558,783 square miles.

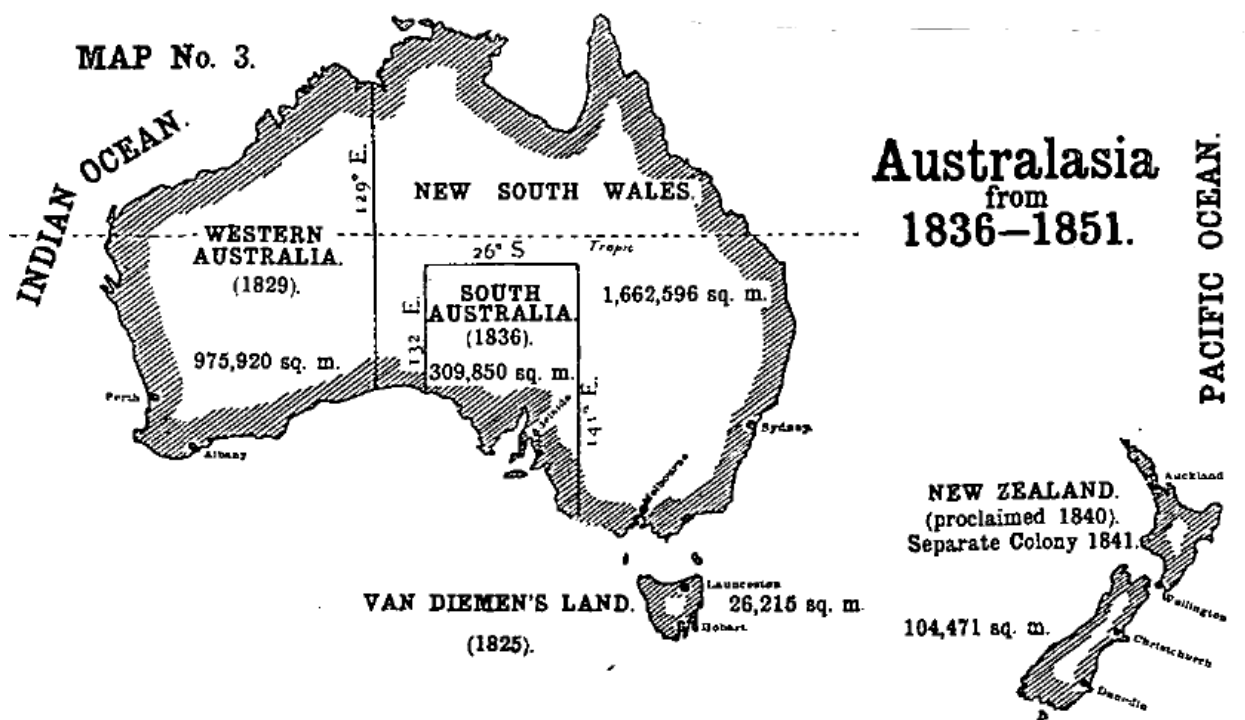
3. Extension of New South Wales Westward.—In 1827 the western or inland boundary of New South Wales was extended westward to the 129th meridian, thus increasing its area by 518,134 square miles, and making it, including New Zealand and excluding Tasmania, 2,076,917 square miles, or excluding also New Zealand, 1,972,446 square miles.

4. Western Australia constituted a Colony.—The territory annexed by Captain Fremantle in 1829, viz., "all that part of New Holland which is not included within the territory of New South Wales," extended eastward to the 129th meridian, and comprised 975,920 square miles. The constitution of this area into the Colony of Western Australia, now one of the six States of the Commonwealth, was the consequence of Fremantle's act. By it the annexation of the whole of the Continent of Australia by the British Crown was completed. The Australian colonies at this time were as indicated in the following table, and illustrated by map No. 2:—

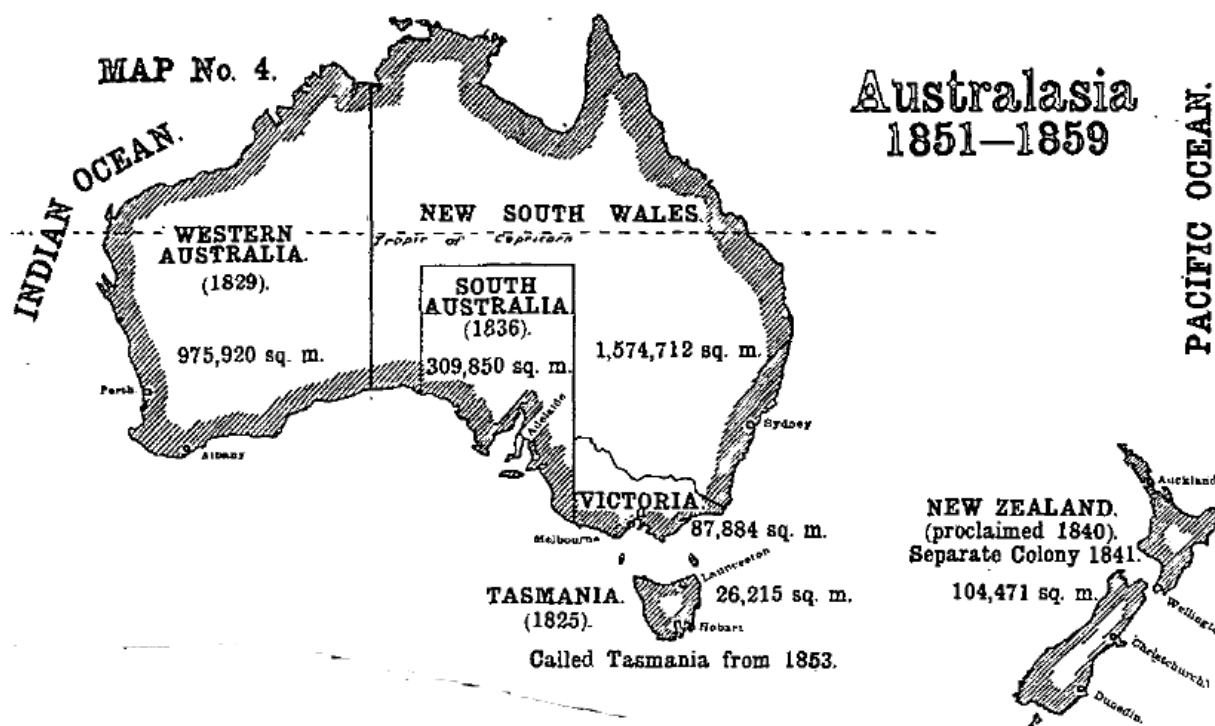
Colony	Date of Annexation	Date of Creation	Date of first Permanent Settlement	Area Square miles
New South Wales (including New Zealand)	1770	1786	1788	2,076,917
Van Diemen's Land		1825	1803	26,215
Western Australia	1829	1829	1829	975,920



5. Creation of South Australia as a Province.—On 15th August, 1834, the Act 4 and 5 William IV., cap. 95, was passed, creating South Australia a "province," and on 28th December, 1836, settlement took place. The new colony embraced 309,850 square miles of territory, which, lying south of the 26th parallel of South latitude, and between the 141st and 132nd meridians of East longitude, was up to that time included within the territory of New South Wales, as will be seen on reference to map No. 3. Thus the area of New South Wales and its territorial dependency, New Zealand, was reduced to 1,767,067 square miles.



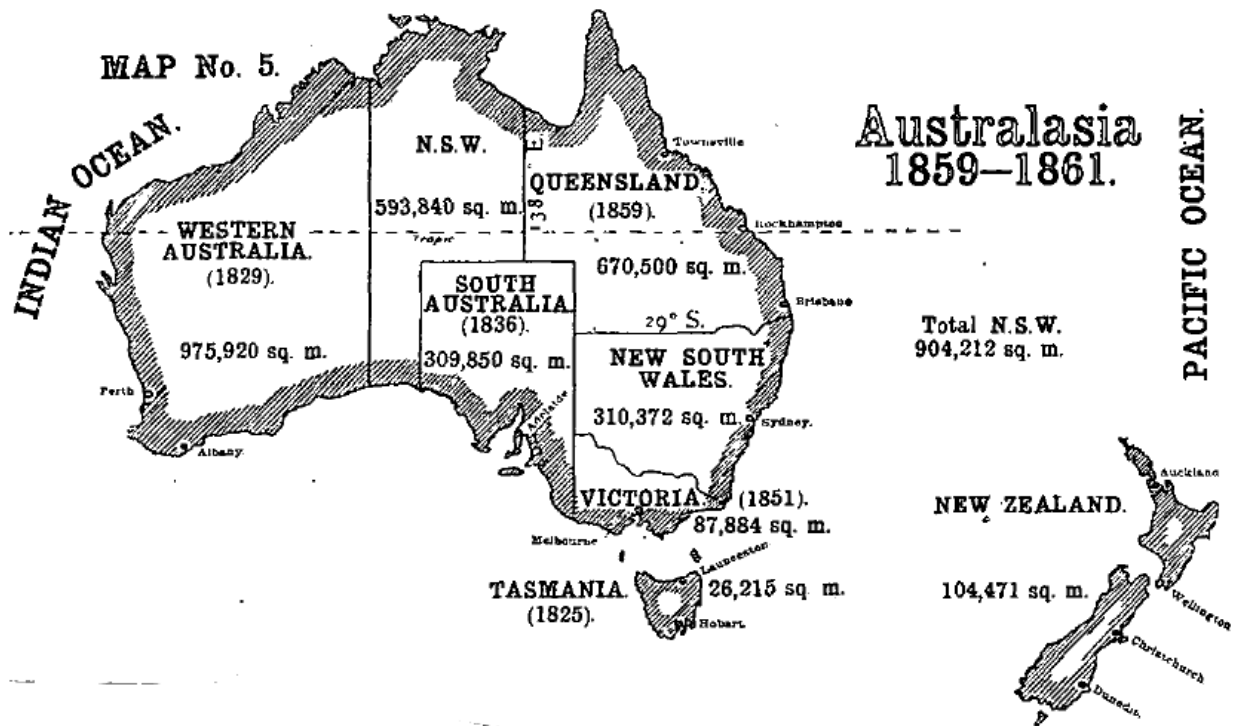
6. Separation of New Zealand.—New Zealand, annexed by proclamation in 1840 as a dependency of New South Wales, as already stated, was, by letters patent of 16th November of that year, constituted a separate colony under the powers of the Act 3 and 4 Vic., cap. 62, of 7th August, 1840. Proclamation of the separation was made on 3rd May, 1841. The area of the colony is 104,471 square miles, and its position in reference to Australia is shown on map No. 4. This separation reduced the political territory of New South Wales to 1,662,596 square miles. See map 3.



7. Separation of Victoria.—In 1851, what was known as the "Port Phillip District" of New South Wales, was constituted the Colony of Victoria, "bounded on the north and north east by a straight line drawn from Cape Howe to the nearest source of the River Murray, and thence by the course of that river to the eastern boundary of the colony of South Australia." The area of the new colony is 87,884 square miles, and its separate existence took effect from 1st July 1851, upon the issuing of the writs for the first election of elective members of the Legislative Council. This reduced the territory of New South Wales to 1,574,712 square miles, as indicated on map 4.

8. Separation of Queensland.—In 1859, letters patent issued on 6th June constituted what was then known as the "Moreton Bay District" of New South Wales, a separate colony, under the name of Queensland, whose boundary was defined as a line

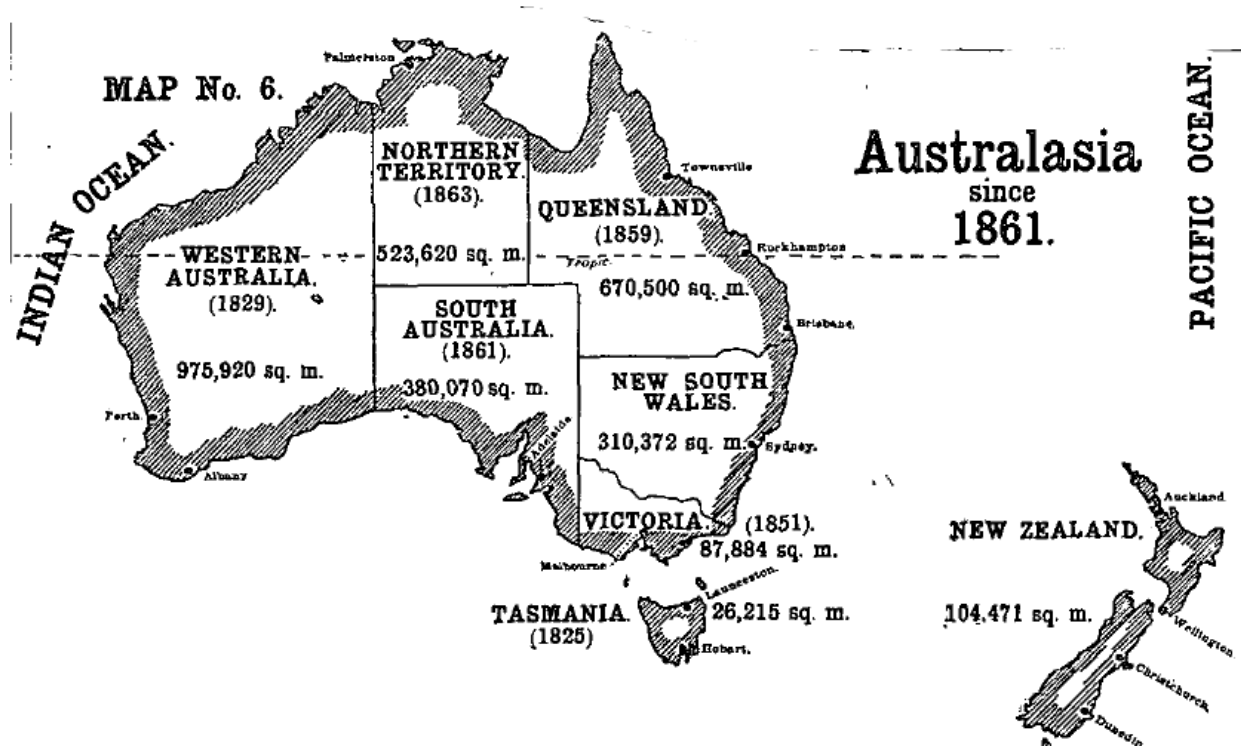
commencing on the sea coast at Point Danger, in latitude about 20° 8' south, running westward along the Macpherson and Dividing Ranges and the Dumaresq River, to the McIntyre River, thence by the 29th parallel of south latitude to the 141st meridian of east longitude ; on the west, the 141st meridian of longitude from the 29th to the 26th parallel, and thence the 138th meridian north to the Gulf of Carpentaria, together with all the adjacent islands, their members and appurtenances in the Pacific Ocean." The area concerned is 670,500 square miles. By this separation, the territory of New South Wales was divided into two parts, viz., one of 310,372 square miles, the present State, and another of 593,840 square miles, of which 523,620 square miles is now the Northern Territory, and 70,220 square miles is now a part of South Australia. These facts are shown on Map No. 5.



9. No further Constitution of Colonies.—Since the separation of Queensland, no other creation of colonies has taken place in Australia, though the boundaries of New South Wales and South Australia were later altered. The dates of foundation of the Australasian Colonies, and their areas at the close of 1859, were therefore as hereunder:—

Colony	Date of Annexation.	Date of Creation	Date of first Parmanent Settlement	Area Square miles
New South Wales	1770	1786	1788	904,212
Tasmania	1770	1825	1803	26,215
South Australia	1770	1834	1836	309,850
Victoria	1770	1851	1834	87,884
Queensland	1770	1859	1824	670,500
Western Australia	1829	1829	1829	975,920
New Zealand	1840	1841	1814?	104,471

10. The Changing Boundaries of the Colonies.— When on 15th August, 1834, the Imperial Government constituted the province of South Australia, there lay, between its western boundary and the eastern boundary of Western Australia (as proclaimed by Fremantle in 1829) a strip of country south of the 26th parallel of south latitude, and between the 132nd and 129th meridians of east longitude, legally included within the territory of New South Wales. The area of this territory, frequently but improperly referred to as " No Man's Land," has been calculated to cover approximately 70,220 square miles. On 10th October, 1861, by the authority of the Imperial Act 24 and 25 Vic., cap. 44, the western boundary of South Australia was extended so, as to cover this strip, and to coincide with the eastern boundary of Western Australia—the 129th meridan. The area of South Australia thus increased by 70,220 square miles, became 380,070 square miles, and her territory that represented on Map No. 6. Nearly two years after this accession of territory, viz., on 6th July, 1863, the Northern Territory, containing 523,620 square miles—also formerly a part of New South Wales — was, by letters patent, brought under the jurisdiction of South Australia, whose area was thus increased to 903,690 square miles; whilst that of New South Wales was diminished by these additions to South Australia, and by the separation of the colonies of New Zealand, Victoria, and Queensland, till its area became only 310,372 square miles. The territories of Tasmania, Western Australia, and the three other separated colonies, with the exception of some minor islands added to Queensland, remain as originally fixed.



11. **Australasia, 1863 to 1900.**—The immense area generally known as Australasia had thus, by 1863, been divided into seven distinct colonies, the areas of which are shown below:—

DATE OF CREATING THE SEVERAL COLONIES

Colony	Year of Formation into Separate Colony	Present Area in Square Miles
New South Wales	1786	310,372
Tasmania	1825	26,215
Western Australia	1829	975,920
South Australia (proper)	1834	380,070
New Zealand	1841	104,471
Victoria	1851	87,884
Queensland	1859	670,500
Northern Territory	1863	523,620
Commonwealth 2,974,581 square miles.		
Australasia 3,079,052 square miles.		

From 1st January, 1901, the colonies mentioned above, with the exception of New Zealand, have become federated under the name of the "Commonwealth of Australia,"* the designation of "Colonies" being at the same time changed into that of "States." The total area of the Commonwealth is, therefore, 2,974,581 square miles, or about equal to the area of the United States of America, exclusive of Alaska, or to that of all Europe, less about one-third of Russia.

The evolution of the various States will be seen in the accompanying diagrams.

12. **British New Guinea or Papua.**—Under the administration of the Commonwealth, but not included in it, is British New Guinea or *Papua*, finally annexed by the British Government in 1884, and for a number of years administered by the Queensland Government but transferred to the Commonwealth by proclamation on 1st September, 1906, under the authority of the Papua Act (Commonwealth) of 16th November, 1905. The area of Papua is about 90,540 square miles.

1. By proclamation dated 10th June, 1901, the area of the Dominion was increased by 280 square miles, making it now 104,751 square miles, by the inclusion of the Cook Group and other Islands.<back>
2. The calculation has been made in this Bureau. The area has usually been left un-stated in references to the territory, but when approximations have been given the margin of error seems to have been somewhat large.<back>
3. South Australia with the Northern Territory is 903,690 square miles.<back>
4. Now 104,751 square miles: increased 10th June, 1901.<back>
5. Now 3,079,340 square miles.<back>

